

# The Circuit Writer



NEWSLETTER OF THE HISTORICAL AND ARCHIVAL SOCIETY  
Northern New Jersey Conference The United Methodist Church

Number 22 Fall 1984

## BI-CENTENNIAL SECOND HALF

The fact that our commercial society is through with Christmas on December 26th ought to make us more careful about our treatment of the Bi-Centennial of Methodism. We have been celebrating an event that took place at Christmas, and whose effects continue to the present.

The Bi-Centennial Plan Book offered suggestions for worship and discussion for the 1984 Advent and Christmas Season. Much of our celebration has centered about the past, but the time of the origin of our Denomination, continuing through 1985 offers examples of events important to present day United Methodists. For almost fifty years Methodism has been reuniting and healing breaches which had their origin at the beginning.

The Quadrennial Missional Priority, the Ethnic Minority Local Church, may be said to have its roots in the Christmas Conference. While the Methodists were organizing in Baltimore, the Evangelical Reformed Church was also organizing. William Otterbein, Preacher, and others subscribed to a Constitution on January 1, 1785, also in Baltimore. This Constitution established a church with practices truly Wesleyan in their nature. They provided for classes and bands, constant religious exercise, organized charity, and outreach to the unchurched. They also provided for "a German school, as soon as possible..." Although the matter of Asbury's attitude toward the "Germans" is a point of controversy, the presence of both methodistic groups organizing in the same city at the same time illustrates the deep seated nature of the "ethnic" problem. In 1814, Asbury wrote, concerning the "Germans" "What are the Lutherans, what are the Reformed, what are the Albrights, but deceitful apes and opposers of Methodists, what are the United Brethren?" His practical answer to the question was "a well regulated flying army." Attitudes and positions taken in 1784 held the Methodist and the Evangelical United Brethren apart for almost 200 years.

There are frequent references to Black persons in the journals of the earliest preachers. Whatcoat, Pilmore and Asbury preached to, and with, Black people. The presence of racial discrimination is also noted by them. Black and White Methodists worshipped together after 1784, but the necessity of separation was not seen until 1787, a very short time, indeed. Bishop Richard Allen wrote, "We bore much persecution from many of the Methodist connection."

Detailed accounts of these divisions can be found in Source-book of American Methodism, edited by Frederick A. Northwood. It is an invaluable resource for the two hundred years of our history.

Out of the past comes instruction. The record needs to be mined for the suggestions it gives for the healing of racism and prejudice. Bill Leier remarked to me at the conclusion of the Bicentennial celebration at the 1984 Annual Conference, "You left one of us out---but we're used to it." He was right. Our EUB heritage is not known as it should be. One way to continue our celebration into the future is to contact him and the members of our former EUB churches to find out what that heritage is.

Similarly, we ought to join with our Black EMLC churches at every opportunity, and if it has not already been done, to contact the AME and AME Zion churches located in our Conference bounds. We have three years to celebrate the unity of Methodism in its early days, and the strong similarity that still marks our Denominations.

As in the past, so in the present, ethnic differences need to be understood and appreciated. The Bi-centennial spirit can be carried on through determined efforts to join with our Hispanic, Korean, and other ethnic congregations. We can do this through meeting together, through sharing and understanding our differences, and through study of our past, where success and failure are equally instructive.

Eugene W. Foote

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#### ANNUAL MEETING AND WORKSHOPS

#### Entering our Third Century

Sunday, January 13, 1985

Madison United Methodist Church

2:30 p.m. Registration, refreshments

3:00 p.m. Workshop--period 1                  4:00 p.m. Workshop--period 2

5:00 p.m. Annual meeting business session

5:15 p.m. Worship - Methodist Hymnody - by The Rev. J. Paul and  
Gertrude Griffith

Workshops - choose two

Please refer to a previously mailed flyer for descriptions  
of each workshop.

1. Documenting Local Church History.                  The Rev. William Beal
2. Now that the Bi-centennial Is Over, What Next? Dr. Charles Yrigoyen Jr.
3. New Trends in the Recovery of Women's Heritage. Dr. Carolyn Gifford
4. Methodism in the Centennial Era - 1884.                  Dr. Kenneth Rowe
5. Historical Churches in the Northern N. J. Conference. Barbara Tomblin
6. Celebrating a Local Church Anniversary.                  The Rev. Richard Dudinak  
and Mr. Daniel deNoyelles
7. Recapturing our Ethnic Heritage.                  Rev. Alfred Waller
8. Tours of the Archives Center.

A pre-registration is requested. Separate forms are included.



## BI-CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS - Northern N. J. Style

Hymn Singing - especially in the Wesleyan tradition - seemed to be the common denominator for all the celebrations. Many of the churches made use of films from our Conference A. V. Library. Historians dug into old records. The men wore costumes of 18th century style and the women swished about in calico and bonnets. True to early church custom, the sexes sat in pews on opposite sides of the church during worship. Many of the historic churches were fortunate to have had "Bishop Asbury Preached Here" claims.

The Bi-centennial inspired people to make banners- large for worship and mini "Circuit Rider" banners for the home. Original plays and history booklets were written. The Church Schools used the Bicentennial Minutes to teach about the early church. Children had fun decorating their class rooms with pictures of circuit riders and colorful characters from history. Mrs. Beverly Swanson of Bridgewater traveled about the conference as Susanna Wesley. Newsletters and newspaper articles reached into the homes of parishioners. Almost everyone was exposed to the Bi-Centennial of Methodism.

Montville had an Aldersgate Celebration and "the nooning" custom of eating a common meal. Chatham had a Love Feast and a service in Camp Meeting style. Harrison parishioners did their celebration at their Charge Conference. Rev. William Noll, president of the Historical & Archival Society, was invited to speak at Livingston and Greenville, Kearny and Arlington presenting his "Methodist Handshake." Summit First celebrated each month with a "Mission to the Congregation from Historical and modern day points of view." Irvington put on an original play "Growing Up with America". Franklin-St. John invited the pastor and choirs of St James A.M.E. Church in Newark and shared the common heritage with them and members of the Christian M.E. and the African M.E. Zion churches.

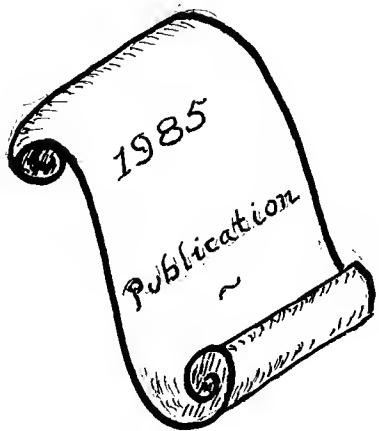
Six churches-Cokesbury, Oldwick, Califon, Allerton, Gladstone and Fairmount had a joint celebration with Barbara Tomblin of Union Village as guest speaker. Four churches-Bridgewater, Bound Brook, Martinsville and Somerville met in Somerville where D.S. Maxwell G. Tow conducted a Wesley Service and the 4 choirs sang together. Kingwood celebrated at the famous "Pulpit Rock" where Bishop Francis Asbury is reported to have preached. Rev. Robert Boettner came by horseback and preached there too. Westfield modeled their celebration in the 18th century style with music and splendor. Neshanic and Centerville celebrated the event jointly.

Milford, Pa. church appealed to the summer visitors with a series of events. In August the Newton church and other Sussex County churches met at the County Court House where the first meeting was held with Bishop Asbury. The dramatic presentation was audio taped for the future. At Mount Tabor the congregation met at the old Tabernacle. Mount Fern held a Tent Meeting in the woods behind the church reenacting an old style Camp Meeting.

Thiels, N. Y. celebrated their own bicentennial. In July 1784 the church was founded as a mission to the Minneceongo Indians. The Korean churches also had a double celebration. It was just 100 years ago that Methodism began in Korea. A team from New Jersey churches visited Korea in July to share in that Centennial celebration.

## 1984 -- Publication

Last year the Historical and Archival Society of our Conference published "The Journals of The Rev. Thomas Morrell, Methodist Patriot and Preacher" - 1747 - 1838 by Robert Drew Simpson and "The Maverick Strain: Dissent and Reform in the United Methodist Tradition" by Kenneth E. Rowe. There are extra copies available for those who wish to purchase them. Look for the display at Annual Conference. \$5.00 per copy.



The current publication will be ready at Annual Conference. It is in three parts. "Methodism in Northwestern New Jersey" by Barbara Tomblin. "Journey of Women as Clergy Persons" by Frances L. Noll. "Commander John L. Lenhart" by Robert D. Simpson. On sale at the Historical and Archival Society display.



Each year awards are given for excellent Church Histories. Those histories prepared in 1984 should be forwarded immediately to Kenneth E. Rowe, Archives Bldg., Drew University, Madison, N.J. 07940 to be considered for this years award presentation at Annual Conference.

All histories of our local churches are of significance to our Conference whether they are in a bound version, mimeographed, or just a brief history added to a bulletin.

Last years awards for 1983 Histories were given to the Wyckoff U. M. Church, First Place and to First U.M. Church of Rahway, Second Place.